

S A F E T Y

December 2013

CANDLE CAREFULLY



Softly glowing candles are the backdrop to holiday decorations and ambience. Unfortunately, candles also account for the top three days of the year for home candle fires: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Spokane Fire Department prefers the use of battery-operated candles rather than open flame models. We also hope that people who use open flame candles remember the basics of candle safety. The following tips were drawn from the most recent candle fire study conducted by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association).

- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn. Some form of combustion placed too close to the candle accounted for 56% of home candle fires.
- Never leave a candle burning in a room without a responsible adult. Nearly 20% of home candle fires resulted from unattended candles.
- Make sure candles are always in sturdy containers. Four percent of candle fires were caused by unstable or combustible candle holders.
- Never light candles when you are drowsy. Falling asleep with a candle burning was a factor in 43% of candle-caused fire deaths.

Winter fires also occur when there are increased chances of storms resulting in power outages. Fire Departments urge residents to use flashlights rather than candles whenever electricity is cut. In the NFPA review of candle-caused fire deaths, the absence of electric power accounted for 34% of the deaths. Battery-operated candles, wind-up flashlights and emergency radios give "safe bet" a new meaning for greatly appreciated holiday gifts!



CARBON MONOXIDE CLOSE CALL

Although carbon monoxide detectors have been mandated in rental units since January 1 of this year, an October 30th incident in Seattle underscored the danger and liability of not providing CO detector protection. An elderly couple forgot to shut off their car when they parked it in the garage below a six unit apartment. Seven persons from the building were rushed to area hospitals for treatment of CO poisoning. Two persons were transported to a hyperbaric chamber in critical condition.

There were two significant but unspoken parts to the news coverage on this incident: (1) there can be long-term damage to the central nervous and cardiovascular systems from CO exposure and (2) every renter has had the right to carbon monoxide detectors in Washington State since 01/01/13.

With the anniversary of this date quickly approaching, it would be wise to remind tenants they likely need to replace their CO batteries soon, or have your managers and maintenance personnel perform the battery replacement. This is an important task to complete as we finish the first year of required carbon monoxide devices.

SNOW LINE: 509.456.2666

As snow forecasts become inevitable, it's time to review City of Spokane snow removal operations and expectations. You can call the Snow Line for a 24-hour schedule of information on the plowing routes. Identify the zone for your building locations on the map at www.SpokaneStreetDepartment.org. When two inches of snow are on the ground with four more inches anticipated, parked cars need to be removed from all arterials and STA bus routes within six hours. Cars in residential areas need to be parked this 2013-14 snow season on the side of the street with **odd-numbered** addresses. Once we reach six inches, snow must be cleared off vehicles parked along the street as well as away from fire hydrants, storm drains and mailboxes. Sidewalks must be cleared of snow within 24 hours. Persons with mobility challenges especially welcome cleared sidewalks and curb cut-outs.



Spokane Fire Department sincerely appreciates your help with keeping fire lanes open and snow shoveled away from hydrants in your neighborhood.

ARCHIVES

You can now view back issues of Spokane Fire Department's Apartment Safety Notes by going to this link: <http://beta.spokanecity.org/fire/prevention/newsletters/>.

The men and women of Spokane Fire Department wish you and your families the very best of this holiday season! We look forward to working with you in 2014 to help keep our community safe and informed.

You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Jan Doherty at jdoherly@spokanefire.org or by calling 509.625.7058.



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